THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • TUESDAY • APRIL 27, 2021 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

WEAR MASKS EVEN AT HOME, GOVT SAYS AMID COVID SURGE

It is high time people followed Covid-appropriate behaviour inside their homes as well, says NITI Aayog member (health) Dr V K Paul

DON'T STEP OUTSIDE, DON'T INVITE GUESTS

The statement came days after a new assessment published in *The Lancet* said there is consistent, strong evidence to prove that the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is behind Covid-19, is predominantly transmitted through the air. Paul added that people should avoid stepping out of their houses unnecessarily and also not invite guests at home | P9

NO MASK MEANS 90% RISK OF INFECTION

- "The way the infection has spread, it will be better if we wear mask inside our homes if we're sitting with someone," Dr Paul said
- "If the mask is not worn properly, there is 90% chance an infected patient can transfer the virus to an uninfected person," said Lav Agarwal, joint secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

$190

THAILAND P.M. PRAYUTH CHAN-OCHA FINED FOR NOT WEARING MASK IN A MEETING

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARWAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

14-day Corona Curfew in K'taka, 4-hr daily breather

Restrictions come into effect from today evening, Chief Minister says it might be extended if Covid-19 cases don't come under control; Night curbs to continue

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

OVERWHELMED by the surge in the number of Covid-19 cases, the Karnataka Government has ordered a 14-day 'Corona Curfew' across the state, starting Tuesday evening. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, at a press conference after a cabinet meeting on Monday, announced that all commercial activities will remain prohibited, much like how it is during the weekend curfew in the state currently.

However, all manufacturing units — except garments factories — agricultural production and auxiliary units, medical supplies production and construction activities will be exempted from the curfew. The CM was careful not to use the term 'lockdown' and, instead, termed it as additional restrictions to contain the pandemic.

"Bengaluru's Covid-19 numbers are overtaking Maharashtra's, and we have to take tough measures to contain the pandemic. It has been decided that starting Tuesday evening, there will be 14 days of strict restrictions on all commercial activities. No public transport will be allowed, but movement of cargo and goods vehicles will not be hindered. Shops selling groceries, milk, meat and other essentials will be allowed to open between 6 am and 10 am every day. Night curfew, which is already in place between 9 am and 6 am, will continue. If cases do not come under control, then we may have to extend these restrictions for another week," Yediyurappa said. P4

People wait to board buses on Tumakuru Road to reach their hometowns, ahead of the corona curfew in Bengaluru on Monday | VINOOKUMAR T

Know what's allowed and what's not

14-day Corona Curfew starting 9 pm on Tuesday till 6 am on May 12

ACTIVITIES RESTRICTED	EXEMPTED SECTORS/SERVICES
Night curfew between 9 pm and 6 am to continue	Schools, colleges shut, but scheduled exams to be allowed
Groceries, milk, meat, fruits, vegetable shops open between 6 am and 10 am	Gyms, amusement parks, cinema halls, shopping malls, swimming pools (except for training) prohibited
Medical emergency services, including pharmacies, open 24/7	All commercial activities shut
Standalone liquor shops, hotels and eateries allowed on 'takeaway' basis	Places of worship to be closed
	Inter- and intra-state passenger travel allowed only in emergency
	Gathering at weddings capped at 50, funerals at 5
	Essential services like government offices, public utilities, fuel stations, banks, post offices etc.
	Scheduled flights & train services
	Taxi, cab services to and from airports & railway stations; airport buses
	Public transport like auto, cabs allowed in emergencies
	Manufacturing industry, excluding garment factories
	Agriculture produce and auxiliary units, construction activities
	The aviation sector and allied units
	E-commerce, home delivery
	Inter- & intra-state goods transport

A Covid-positive patient on oxygen support waiting for admission in a car outside the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital in Delhi on Monday | PARVEEN NEGI

NATIONWIDE

	APRIL 25	APRIL 26
Fresh cases	3,49,691	3,52,991
Recoveries	2,17,113	2,19,272
Deaths	2,767	2,812

TAKE YOUR SHOT

April 25: **25,36,612 doses**

April 26: **31,74,688 doses**

Total: 14,50,85,911 doses

BIDEN PROMISES FULL SUPPORT, PM THANKS HIM

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi thanked US President Joe Biden for his assistance in managing the raging pandemic, during a phone conversation on Monday. "Discussion with US president also underscored importance of smooth & efficient supply chains of vaccine raw materials, medicines," Modi said | P9

OUR IPL SPACE

INVISIBLE HELPING HANDS

Several people across India have used Twitter as a platform to launch one of the biggest SOS campaigns to help people to survive Covid crisis

A NOVEL INITIATIVE

Fr John Puthuva, the vicar of a church in Kalady near Kochi, has been visiting patients to offer them comfort. He also launched #VaccineChallenge drive | P15

Bengal has highest case spike rate now

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

AT 9.5%, poll-bound West Bengal has the highest Covid-19 case growth in the country now, data shared by the Union Health Ministry showed.

It was followed by Karnataka, which has a near explosive growth rate of 9%, while Delhi, reeling under a huge medical oxygen crisis, has the second lowest growth rate at 1.5% after Maharashtra (0.5%), among the surge states. And at about 50%, Bengal's capital Kolkata now has the highest test positivity rate.

The stark West Bengal data showed a mirror to the Election Commission of India that till recently chose to ignore all violations of Covid-appropriate behaviour in the run-up to the eight-phase elections in the state. Despite massive mask-less political rallies that created an uproar, the Electiomn Commission tried to wish them away till last week when it got a stinker from the Calcutta High Court and was forced to act.

India, now the worst-hit in the pandemic globally, has been reporting nearly 1,500 or more daily deaths since April 20. On Sunday, the highest 2,812 fatalities were recorded. There are also concerns that the fatality count is being majorly undercounted in most cities and towns.

The country now has 28,13,656 active cases, of which 3,52,991 were registered in the last 24 hours, but the Centre has not disclosed the number of people hospitalised, on oxygen support, in ICUs or those on ventilators.

In a Health Ministry press briefing on Monday, several government authorities, including Dr V K Paul, member, Niti Aayog and Randeep Guleria, director, AIIMS Delhi, stressed that no healthcare infrastructure in the world can take the load of such huge numbers. Both Paul and Guleria, senior members of the national Covid-19 task force, urged patients to follow home isolation protocols unless hospitalisation is absolutely required.

'ECI responsible for second wave'; HC threatens to stop vote count

HARISH MURALI @ Chennai

CENSURING the Election Commission of India (ECI) for not stopping political parties that were deliberately abusing the Covid-19 protocol during pre-election rallies, the Madras High Court on Monday said the commission was "singularly responsible" for the second wave of the pandemic in the country. The court also warned that it would stop the counting of votes on May 2 if the poll panel didn't put in place a strict Covid-19 protocol.

When the ECI contended that it had earlier put safety measures in place, the bench orally observed, "Were you on another planet when political rallies were being held?" It further stated, "Election Commission Officers should probably be booked on murder charges."

The first bench, comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy, made these observations on a plea moved by Transport Minister MR Vijayabhaskar, who sought a direction to the ECI to ensure strict adherence to safety measures to ensure fairness in the counting the votes.

Free vax for 18-44 age group in govt hospitals

ANUSHA RAVI @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA on Monday joined a list of states to announce free Covid-19 vaccines to its citizens aged between 18 and 44. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa announced that citizens between the ages of 18 and 44 will be given free Covid-19 vaccines at government hospitals from May 1 when the fourth phase of the inoculation drive commences.

So far, 17 other states including Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Goa and Kerala have announced free vaccines for citizens. The Karnataka Government has already placed an order for one crore doses of AstraZeneca CoviShield vaccines from Serum Institute of India, Pune.

"The Central Government is vaccinating those above the age of 45 for free and the State Government has decided to make vaccination for people between the ages 18 to 44 free," Yediyurappa said.

As on Monday morning, Karnataka had inoculated 11,78,345 citizens with both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. All those inoculated are either front line workers or health care workers or citizens above the age of 45.

"We are witnessing a second wave of Covid-19 infections, but other countries are seeing third and fourth waves. The only way to protect ourselves is vaccination," said Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar. P4

STATEWIDE

	APRIL 25	APRIL 26
Fresh cases	34,804	29,744
Recoveries	6,982	2,81,042
Deaths	143	201

SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN
DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY
BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA, INDIA

APPROVAL & RECOGNITIONS
Approved by UGC & AICTE
Re-accredited by NAAC with 'A' Grade
Accredited by NBA
International Accreditation by ABET, USA

MHRD India Ranking (NIRF) 2020
20th Best in University Category
34th Best in Engineering Category
23rd Best in Medical Category
12th Best in Dental Category

Admission to B.Tech. Programmes through SAAT

B.Tech. Programmes Offered
- Civil Engineering
- Computer Science & Engineering
- Computer Science and Information Technology
- Electronics & Communication Engineering
- Electrical & Electronics Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Mechanical Engineering

Placement Highlights
- Number of companies visited - 110
- Highest Salary Offered - 31 Lakh
- Companies offering more than 10 LPA - 21

Scholarship up to 35,000/-

Major Recruiters
Amazon
Capgemini Digital
Cognizant
Dell
Deloitte
DXC Technology
HCL
HP RND
Infosys
Informatica
L&T Technology
Microsoft
PWC
Robert Bosch
TCS
Wipro

Apply online at : www.soa.ac.in

DUTY CALLS

Haven't seen my kids for a year, says O_2 tanker driver

AJITH M S @ Mysuru

Shankar Majhi, who has been driving oxygen tankers, has not seen his five daughters for a year, yet he is more concerned about the decanting of his liquid oxygen tanker, which has become more valuable than "sona". A small misstep can leave many gasping, with Covid-19 cases in a spiral in Karnataka.

Majhi has been behind the wheel of oxygen tankers for the past 20 years, but says he has never seen so much demand or done so many trips in his entire career. He and his co-driver, Mohammed Hakeekath, both from Bihar, take turns to run at least three round trips a week – to Koppal and back -- transporting oxygen without a break.

"Many lives depend on this oxygen. There are dangers on the road and technical issues too, but a delay in reaching the destination can create many problems. In such an emergency situation, we do not even stop for tea through the entire eight-hour journey. During the decanting too, we have to be around, and until the tanker reaches the oxygen plant again, we are on our toes," he said.

Oxygen tanker drivers Shankar Majhi and Mohammed Hakeekath with their vehicle in Mysuru on Monday | UDAYSHANKAR S

"Earlier, we used to take a day's break between trips but now there is no time for that, we just take turns and rush to hospitals," he added.

Majhi, father of five daughters and a son, says that he has not met his family since the first wave of the pandemic. "I stayed back, unlike the others, during the first lockdown," he said.

CONTINUED ON: P7

'Covid pandemic resurgence could derail economy'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Hyderabad

COVID resurgence carries the risk of protracted restrictions and disruptions in supply chains with consequent inflationary pressures, according to the RBI.

Pandemic protocols, speedier vaccination, ramping up hospitals and ancillary capacity, and remaining resolutely focused on a post-pandemic future of strong and sustainable growth of macroeconomic and financial stability is the way forward, the central bank noted in its monthly bulletin released on Monday.

According to RBI, India's economic activity is holding up against Covid-19's renewed onslaught. With activity indicators largely remaining resilient in March and growing beyond pre-pandemic levels, it said growth outlook is bright. "If the relatively conservative growth forecast of the RBI holds, India's GDP in 2021-22 will exceed its level in the pre-pandemic year of 2019-2020," it said.

Meanwhile, retail inflation in March edged up to 5.5% but still was within the tolerance band.